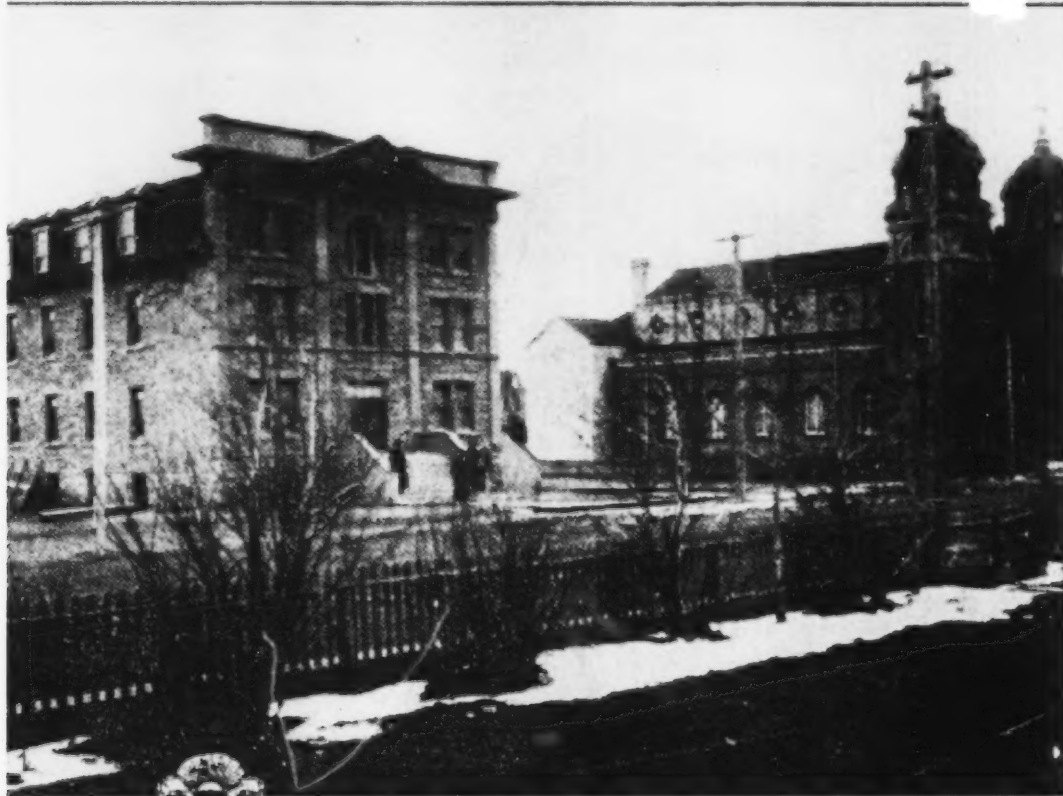
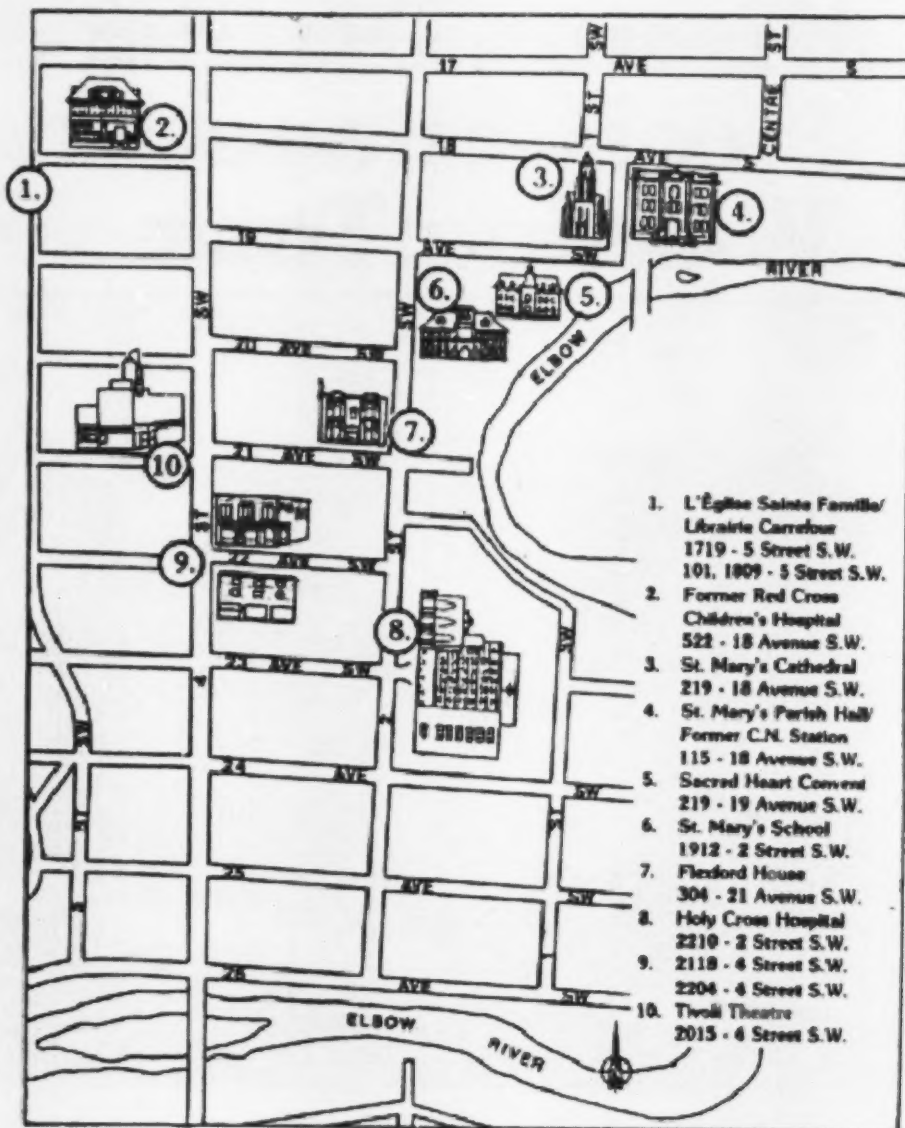

The Mission District A Heritage Walking Tour



THE CITY OF CALGARY
PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT

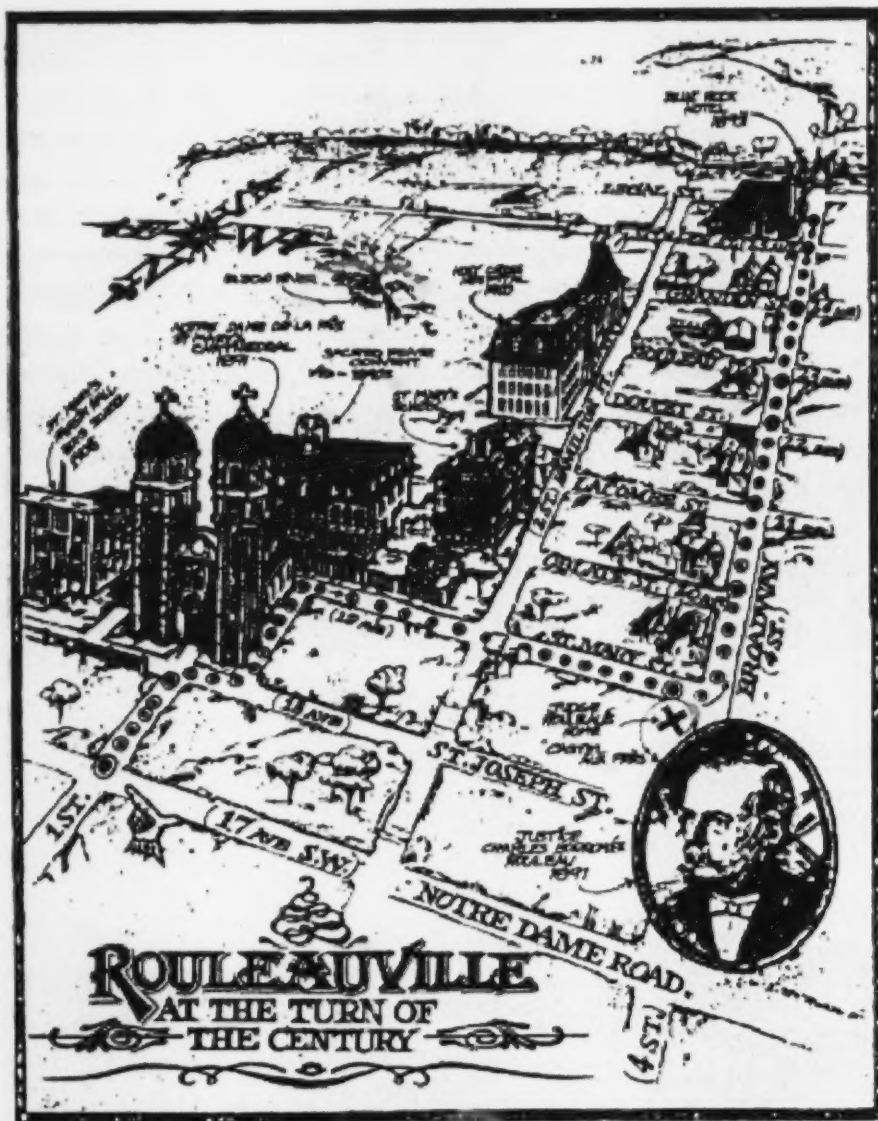
Map of tour area



Calgary is often stereotyped as a city with a population of Anglo-Saxon descent, but such an image belies Calgary's rich ethnic heritage. Indians, Metis, French, English, Scottish, Irish and Chinese along with many other groups contributed to the growth and development of the city long before the turn of the century. An excellent example of Calgary's cosmopolitan history is the Mission district. This neighbourhood was founded by French Canadian priests who established a parish here in the 1870s. On the site of the original Catholic mission, the district was named Rouleauville after the brothers Charles and Edward Rouleau who were among its most influential pioneers. By walking through the streets of this community and exploring its history we can understand the strength of the influence exerted by French Canadians on Calgary's cultural and economic development.



Panorama of Calgary from Mission Hill, c. 1892.



A Sketch of Rouleauville (Note Original Street Names)

In 1875, a troop of North-West Mounted Police was sent to what is now Calgary with orders to establish a fort. As they crossed the hills just north of the Bow River they met with an unexpected sight:

We saw one lone tent on the prairie...pitched some distance west of where the Elbow and Bow Rivers meet; and on investigating it we found it was occupied by Father Doucet, a young priest but a short time out of France.

A priest of the Oblate Fathers, Doucet came to the banks of the Elbow River in 1872 to establish a mission. Named Notre Dame de la Paix, the church which Doucet built was later relocated to a site just south of early Calgary. The settlement of Rouleauville grew up around this location.

Officially founded in 1884, Rouleauville was intended to become the "Quebec of the West." Soon it became a thriving community, clustered around its parish church. However, the constant influx of English-speaking settlers eventually changed the nature of the area and by 1907 the district had become annexed to the growing city of Calgary. By World War I the name of the community was changed to the English name of Mission after its origins as the site of the Roman Catholic mission.

This tour begins at 1719 - 5th Street S.W. Parking is available on streets in the area.

1. L'ÉGLISE SAINTE-FAMILLE

1964

1719 - 5th Street S.W.

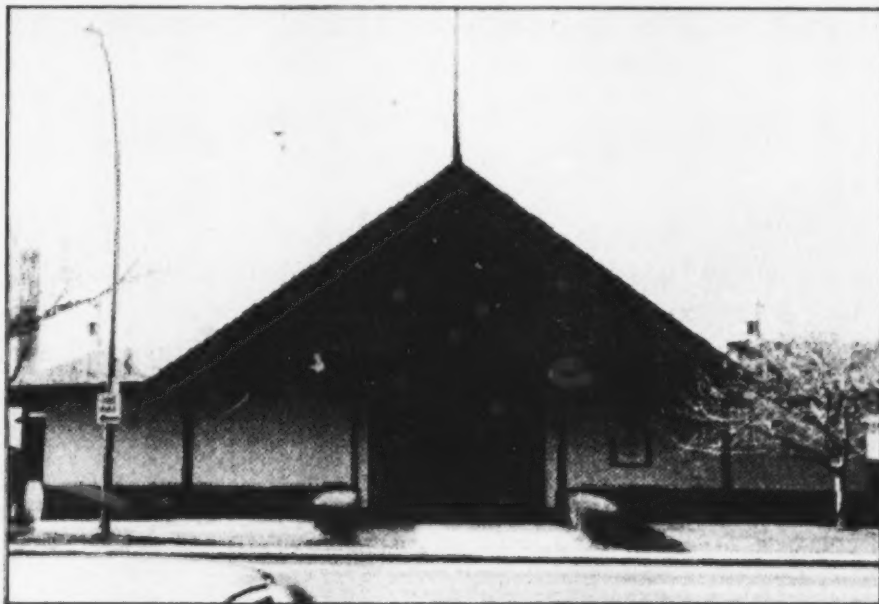
LIBRAIRIE "LE CARREFOUR"

101, 1809 - 5th Street S.W.

Owing to the large population of English and Irish settlers in Rouleauville, the church fathers decided, in the late 1880s, to anglicize the French Catholic church. At first the French community accepted this language change. Eventually they reconsidered their decision and in the 1920s they petitioned the Church for the establishment of a French-speaking parish.

Their request was granted with the founding of L'Église Sainte-Famille. The first church building was acquired in the late 1920s. Today's structure, the second on the site, was constructed in 1964.

A few years after the construction of the new building, L'Église Sainte-Famille was placed in the charge of the Oblate Fathers of Alberta, the Catholic missionaries who first settled this area of Calgary. It remains in their care today.



The present L'Église Sante-Famille.

"Le Carrefour," a French bookstore, was built next to the church on the north side of the Villa Jean Toupin. It was established in 1976 by the French Canadian Society and stocks a variety of French fiction, records and cards.

Both the church and the bookstore are significant as they attest to the French origins of this neighbourhood. They now serve as reminders of the Oblate missionaries who originally settled here and as focal points for the surviving French-speaking community.

Please walk north to 18th Avenue S.W. and turn east. The next site is midway down the block on the north side.

2. FORMER RED CROSS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
522 - 18th Avenue S.W. 1914



Hospital ward during the 1920s.

Originally built as a residence in 1914, this building is more interesting when considered in terms of its later use. In 1922 the Alberta division of the Canadian Red Cross rented this building and converted it into a children's hospital. For the next seven years it served as a hospital for children whose parents could not afford pediatric care.



Red Cross Children's Hospital, 1922.

The Junior Red Cross Hospital had a capacity of 35 beds. It was closed in 1929 when a new 50 bed hospital was opened on 20th Avenue. This Red Cross Children's Hospital was the first of its kind in Canada.

Please walk east, cross over 4th Street S.W. and continue east two blocks along 18th Avenue S.W.

3. ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

219 - 18th Avenue S.W.

1955

This parish had its origins in a humble log cabin named Notre Dame de la Paix. Built on the banks of the Elbow River in 1883, the small church was only a temporary sanctuary. A new mission, larger and closer to the growing town of Calgary, was needed as soon as possible. Squatters were encroaching on the land that had been designated for the new town of Rouleauville. Also, news that the Canadian Pacific Railway would be going through the Calgary area assured that even more settlers would soon be looking for land.

Father Albert Lacombe, Doucet's fellow missionary, decided to safeguard the property by obtaining a direct title for the land from the Minister of the Interior.



Notre Dame de la Paix, c. late 1870s.

He set off to Ottawa in 1883 and, after much persistent lobbying, returned with guaranteed possession of two sections of land adjacent to the Elbow River.

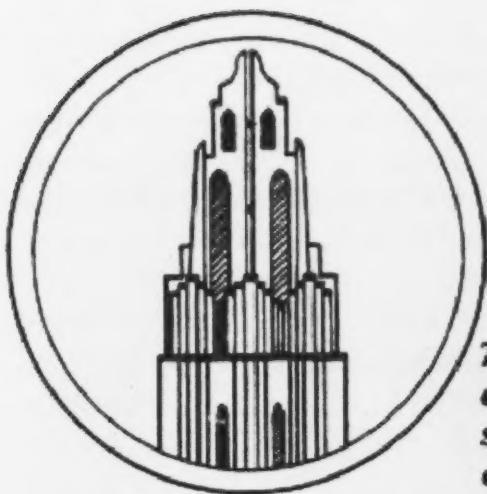


*Former
St. Mary's
Cathedral.*

In 1884 Notre Dame de la Paix was relocated to a site on the new property. Owing to a rapid increase in the parish population, the structure soon proved too small. In 1889 a grand church was built on the site. The Catholic parish was rapidly becoming anglicized and in 1889 its name was changed from Notre Dame de la Paix to St. Mary's. In 1913 the church was raised to the distinction of "Cathedral" to reflect the establishment of the Diocese of Calgary which was formed the year before.



Present St. Mary's Cathedral, c. late 1950s



The architect of the present cathedral used the brick construction to emphasize the elongated lines of the spire.

The original cathedral was demolished in 1955. Long delays during its construction had resulted in structural weakening of the foundations and, according to contemporary accounts, the building would have fallen down had it not been demolished. The present St. Mary's Cathedral was built to replace it. To the west of the cathedral, marked by a cairn, is the broken cornerstone from the old cathedral, bearing the original inscription of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, "O.M.I. 1889."

The next site is immediately east across the street.

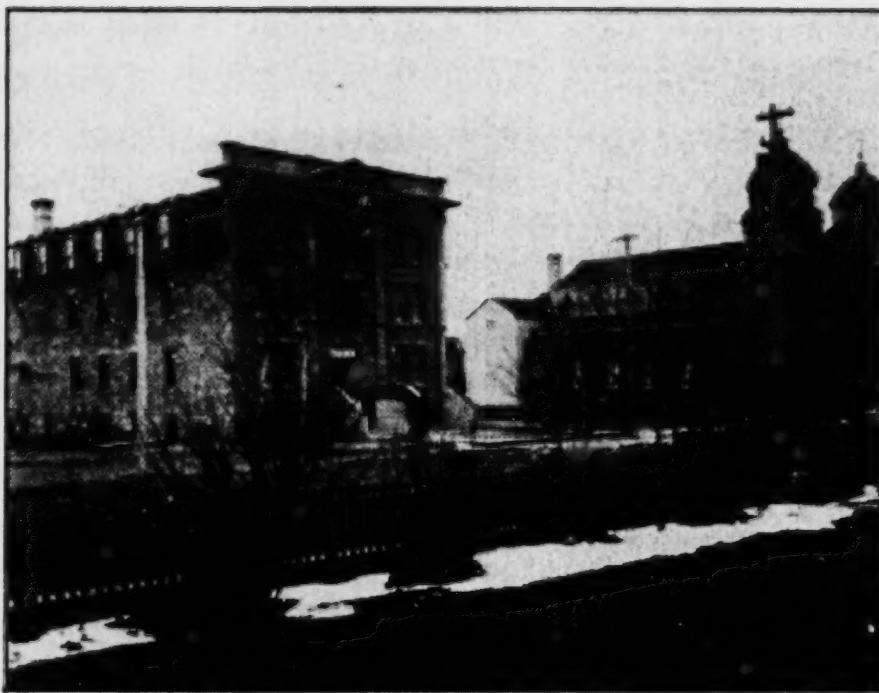
**4. ST. MARY'S PARISH HALL -
FORMER CN STATION
115 - 18th Avenue S.W.**

1905

Directly across First Street S.W. from St. Mary's Cathedral stands the old Parish Hall. Built of local sandstone in 1905, it was designed by Architect James G. O'Gara as a multipurpose building to meet the varied needs of the growing community. The hall seated 500 people and was used for concerts, recitals and theatrical presentations. From 1907 to 1910 its basement served as the Catholic Boys School during the day, while night classes were held to teach English and mathematics to newly-arrived European immigrants.

The parish served other ethnic communities as well. Ukrainian Catholic religious services were held here and a Ukrainian reading room was maintained.

In addition, nineteen societies made regular use of its facilities. These included Catholic organizations such as the Catholic Mutual Benevolent Society and the prestigious all-male St. Mary's Club, as well as secular groups such as the Calgary Operatic Society. St. Mary's Parish Hall was thus a focal point not just for the Catholic community, but for the entire population of the district.



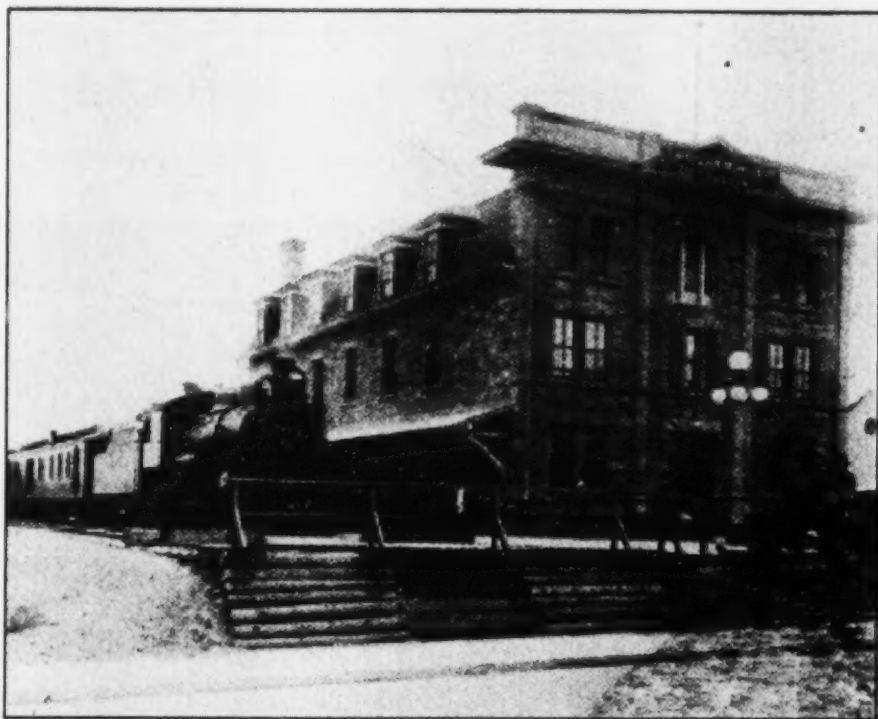
St. Mary's Cathedral and Parish Hall.

But in 1911 all of this changed...

Calgary's real estate industry was booming and the Oblate Fathers soon discovered that their Parish Hall was standing on a very valuable piece of property. The Canadian Northern Railway was expanding in an ambitious bid to compete with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Mission land provided a desirable site for the proposed Calgary terminal. Canadian Northern purchased the Parish Hall from the Fathers with an eye to purchasing more land later. The Hall was retained as a temporary station until a new one could be built.

The first train arrived in 1913 and the last one left in 1971. The "temporary" station became the permanent one when the local economy declined following World War I. High costs and moderate revenues contributed to the railway's problems and eventually both the railway and its Calgary station were taken over by the Canadian National Railway.

When it became apparent that a major terminal would not be built on the Parish Hall site, the Oblate Fathers made a series of unsuccessful attempts to recover the building. After 1971, when the railway ceased using the building as a terminal, the hall was vacant for many years. Finally, it was acquired by the City of Calgary in 1979. Major renovations, completed in 1987, created dance studios and office space.



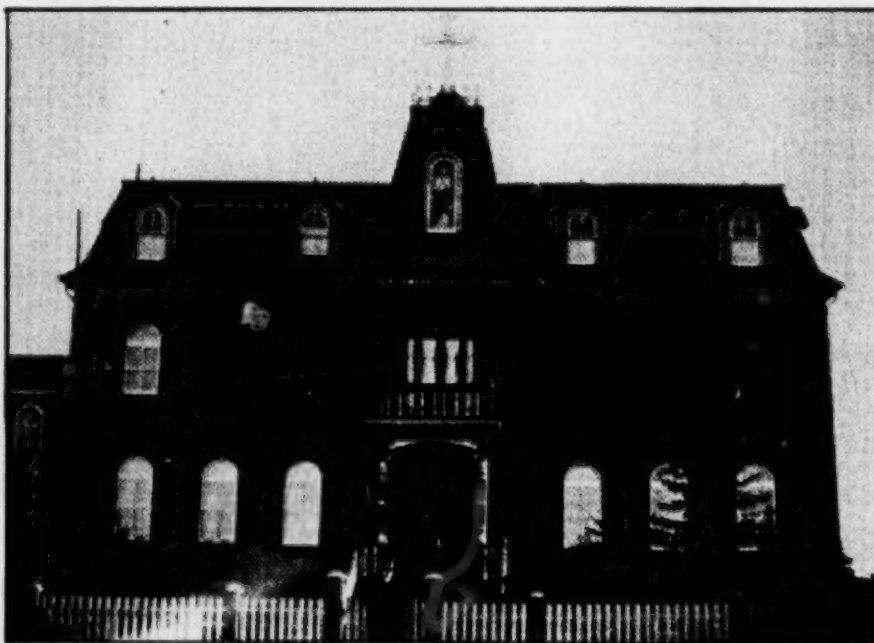
Canadian Northern Railway Station.

One block south of the Cathedral is the next building.

5. SACRED HEART CONVENT
219 - 19th Avenue S.W.

1893

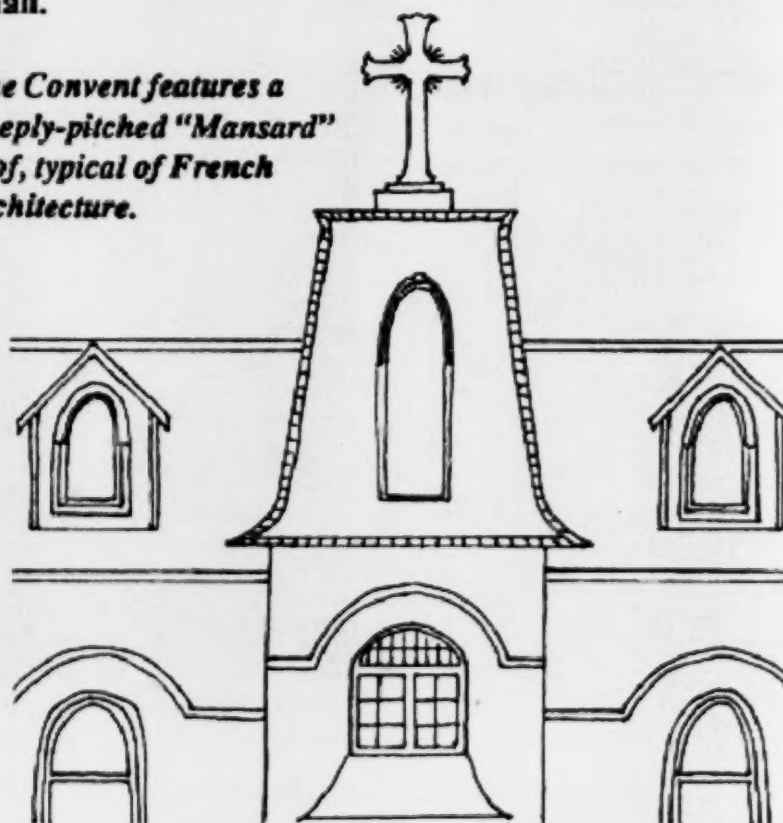
The Oblate missionaries were pleased when teachers arrived in July, 1885 to open a Catholic school in Rouleauville. As members of a religious order devoted to teaching, the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus were forced to leave St. Laurent during the North West Rebellion.



Sacred Heart Convent, 1893.

As housing was scarce, the Parish's newly completed chapel became the Sisters convent. In September of 1885 classes began with fifteen French-speaking and Metis pupils in attendance. The school's reputation spread quickly. The number of students tripled in less than a year and continued to grow until the Fathers decided to build the present convent in 1893. Although intended to serve as a boarding school for all of Southern Alberta, even with additions this building proved too small.

The Convent features a steeply-pitched "Mansard" roof, typical of French architecture.

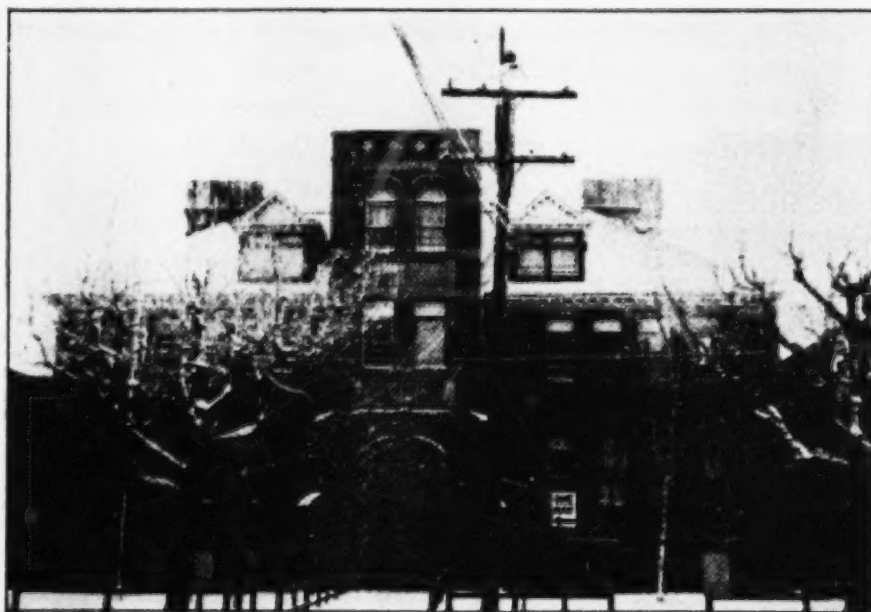


Now walk west to 2nd Street S.W. and half a block south. Our next site is on the east side of the street.

6. ORIGINAL ST. MARY'S SCHOOL
1912 - 2nd Street S.W.

1909

As the convent was no longer big enough, boys' classes were moved to the basement of the Parish Hall while girls' lessons continued at the Convent. A new school, named St. Mary's, was completed in 1909 and boys and girls were taught grades 1 through 12.



St. Mary's School.



Classical detailing was used to impart an air of grandeur to institutional buildings.

By the time St. Mary's was built, the student body was composed predominantly of Catholics of English and Irish descent. As a result, the trustees changed the language of instruction from French to English.

In 1918 the institution reverted to a school for girls only. A new, large high school was constructed on 18th Avenue S.W. in 1957 and given the name St. Mary's. The name of the original St. Mary's School was changed to St. Martin de Porres.

Next walk south one and a half blocks then turn west. Site number seven is the corner building on the north side of the street.

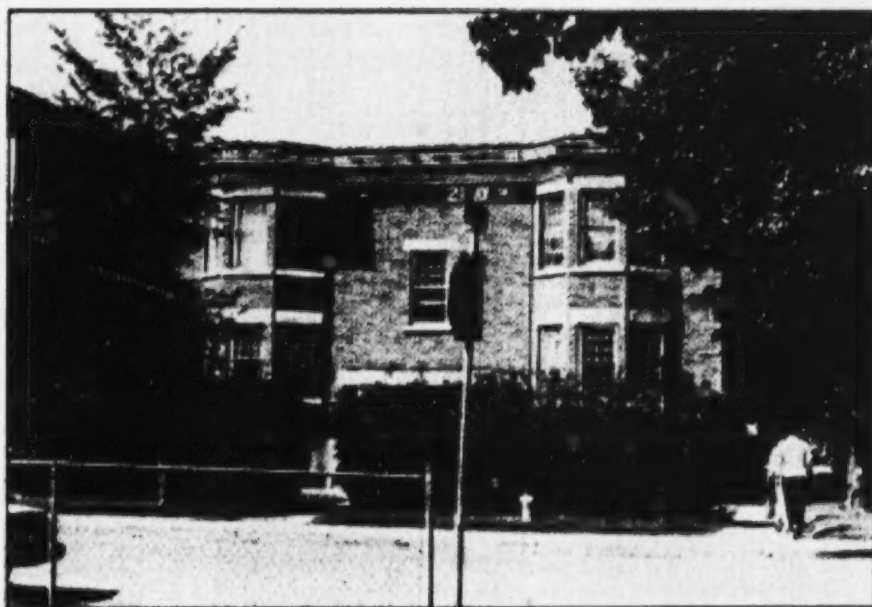
7. FLEXFORD HOUSE
304 - 21st Avenue S.W.

1912

During the pre-World War I period, and for several years after, Mission became home for many of Calgary's newcomers. From 1900 to 1914 many of them settled into single family wood-frame houses. A number of apartment buildings also provided housing in this area. Flexford house dates from 1912 and is typical of the small walk-up apartments of the period.



*A heavy cornice, or
moulding, was often used
to relieve the plain facade of apartment buildings.*



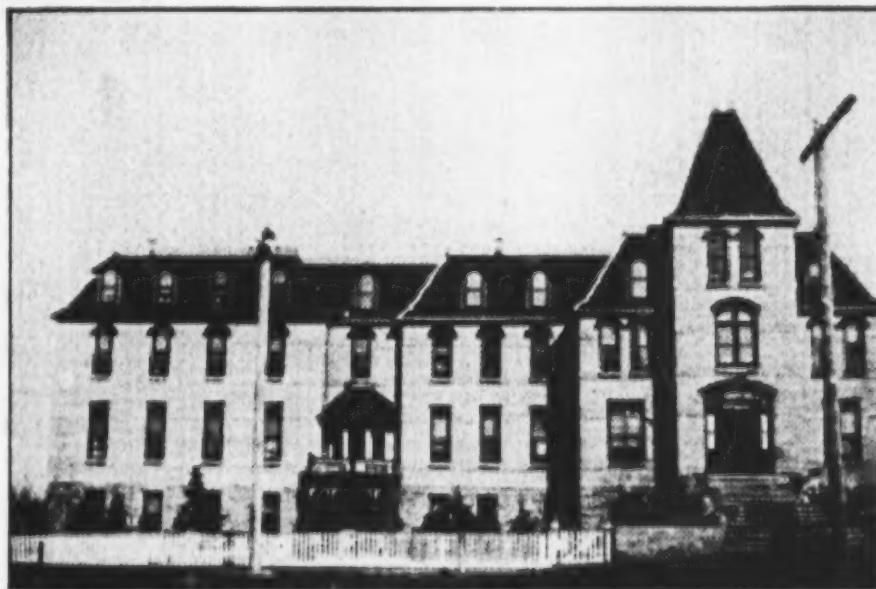
Flexford House

Now continue one block south to view the next site on the east side of the street.

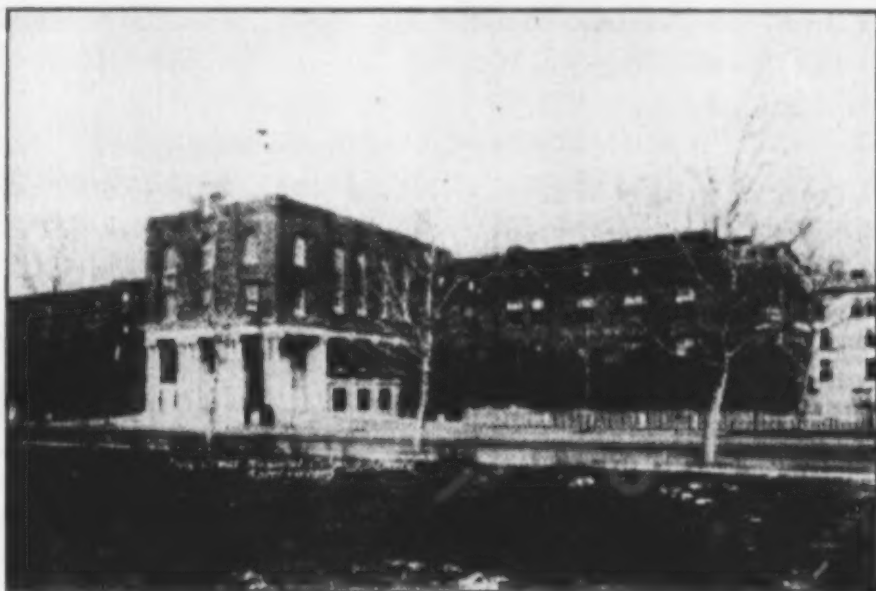
8. HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL
2210 - 2nd Street S.W.

1892

The present Holy Cross Hospital complex stands on the site of Calgary's first Catholic hospital, commissioned by Bishop Grandin in 1891. In January of that year four Sisters of Charity, of the Grey Nuns from Montreal, stepped off the train at two o'clock on a wintry morning. They had come to the Oblate Mission to care for the sick. The hospital they started had room for six patients and a stove. By 1892 the Sisters opened a new hospital which housed thirty-five patients and boasted the modern conveniences of hot and cold running water, baths and electricity. A nursing school was started at the hospital in 1907.



Holy Cross Hospital, c. 1900.



Holy Cross Hospital, 1929

The original building was enlarged in 1928 and again in 1950. Parts of the original structure, including the chapel which dated to 1928, were torn down to make room for more modern facilities. In May, 1969 the Sisters of Charity announced they could no longer support the hospital and its operations were taken over by the Alberta government. No part of the original hospital stands today.

Now walk west along 22nd Avenue S.W. to 4th Street S.W. The next buildings are best viewed from the west side of the street.

9. COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

1912

2118 - 4th Street S.W.

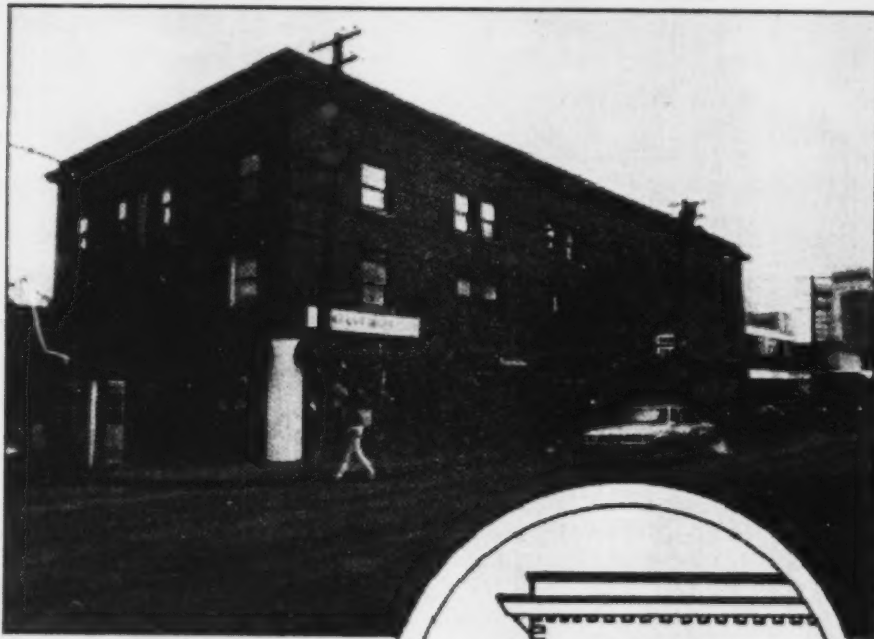
2204 - 4th Street S.W.

The community of Mission developed primarily as a suburb of Calgary. Downtown was relatively far away so 4th Street S.W. emerged as the commercial centre for the district.

These two commercial blocks are typical of those constructed in Calgary during the boom period from 1905 to 1914. Most buildings of this type were made of brick and housed retail shops on the ground level with apartments above.

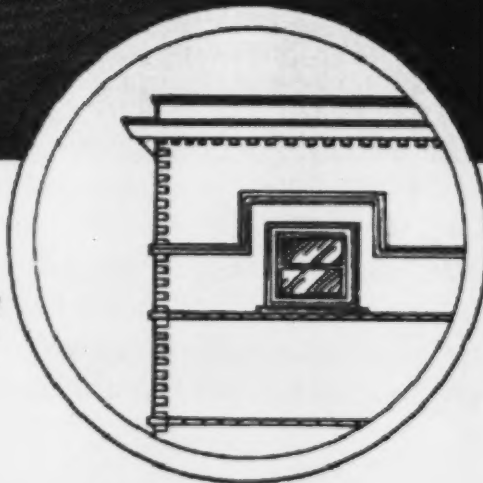


2118 - 4th Street S.W.



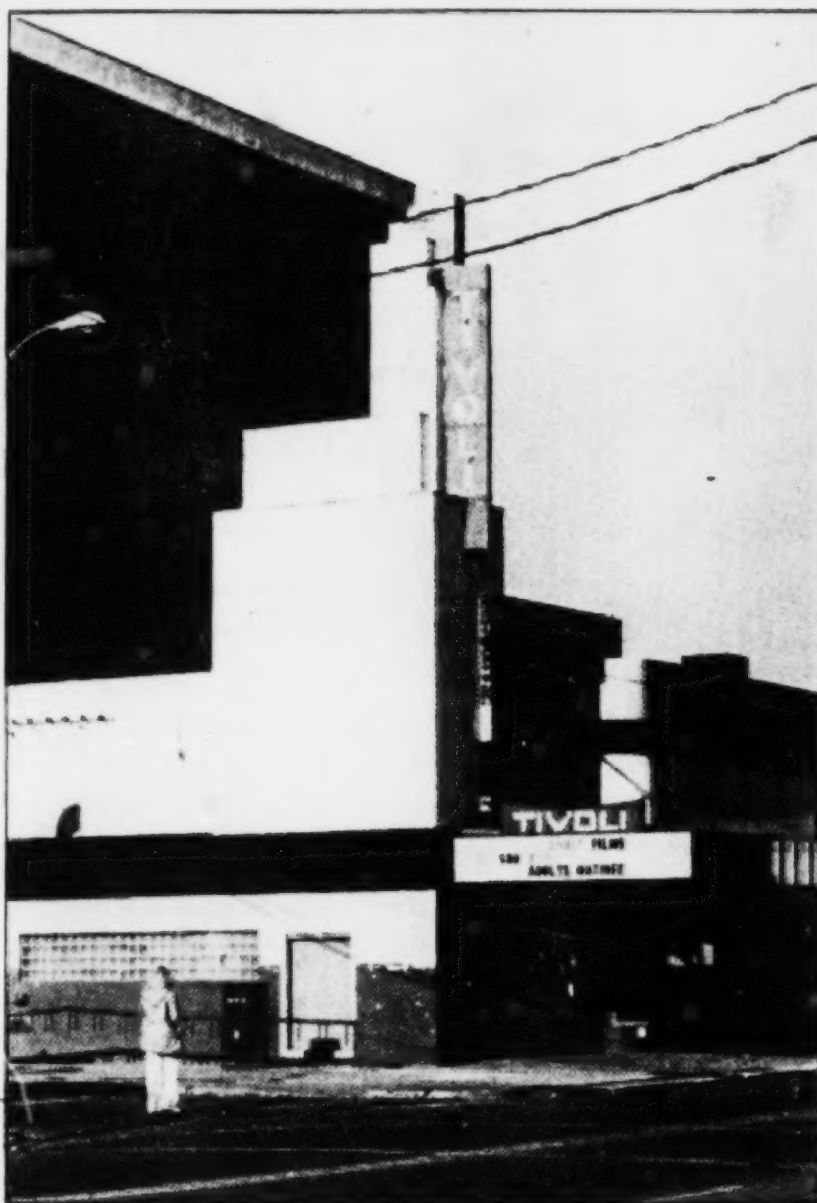
2204 - 4th Street S.W.

*Decorative brickwork
was used to give grace and
proportion to what would
otherwise be a brick box.*



In recent years owners have renovated many of these structures creating useful commercial space while maintaining their original charm. Many other buildings are now being recognized for their redevelopment potential.

Please walk north one block. The final site on this tour sits on the northwest corner of this intersection.



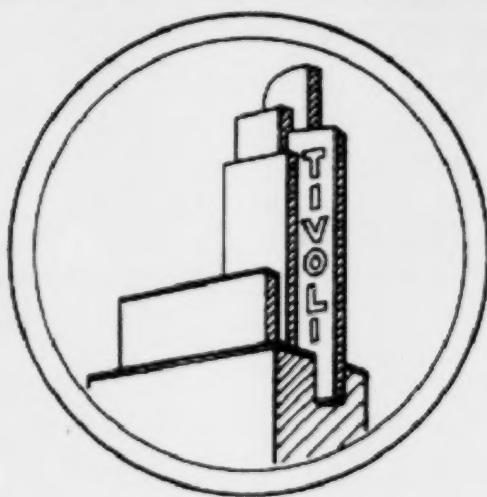
Tivoli Theatre.

10. TIVOLI THEATRE
2015 - 4th Street S.W.

1937

The 1920s and 1930s marked a boom in the Hollywood movie industry. As a result, several theatres were built in Calgary at this time. The Tivoli Theatre was constructed in 1937 and was one of Calgary's first suburban theatres.

John Russell, Head of the Architecture Department at the University of Manitoba and designer of this building, was instrumental in introducing the "Moderne" or "Art Deco" style to Canada. A good example of this movement, the Tivoli Theatre is his only remaining structure in Calgary.



*The curves and fins on
this building were inspired
by Buck Rogers' vehicles.*

**This concludes the Mission District Heritage Walking Tour.
To return to the beginning of the tour, walk one block west and
three blocks north.**

This Heritage Walking Tour is a joint project of the City of Calgary Heritage Advisory Board and the City of Calgary Planning and Building Department. The Heritage Advisory Board is a Committee appointed by City Council to recognize and encourage the preservation of important elements of the history of our community. Conservation of buildings from Calgary's past is important so as to ensure future generations of Calgarians an opportunity to appreciate the richness of the City's heritage.

For further information about Heritage Conservation in Calgary contact:

**The City of Calgary Information Centre
Planning and Building Department
P.O. Box 2100, Postal Station 'M'
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5
(403) 268-5333**

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